

**DATE:** September 2016

**TO:** School District Youth Options & Course Options Coordinators, UW Institutions, Technical Colleges, Private Non-Profit Colleges/Universities, and Tribally Controlled Colleges

**FROM:** Kevin Miller, Dual Enrollment Consultant

**SUBJECT:** Youth Options and Course Options Update

I'm sure you've heard this a lot the last couple weeks, and here it is again – Welcome Back! There have been no statutory or administrative rule changes made to Youth Options or Course Options since last year. So this update will focus on reminders and select concerns that emerged this past year.

### ***Youth Options and Course Options Contact***

Annually, every Wisconsin public school district is required to notify the Department of Public Instruction who will be the designated contact for Youth Options. Though not required by statute, we would also like to know who will serve as the contact for Course Options. To see who is currently listed as your contact, check the list [here](#).

The *PI-8703 Youth Options and Course Options Administrator/Coordinator Designation* form was included with this memo and is available at the Youth Options website [here](#). If your district or institution has not already provided this information, please use this form to confirm or change the Youth Options contact and to indicate if the same person will also serve as the Course Options contact. If Course Options will have a different contact, please complete the bottom portion of the form with that person's information.

The form notes the deadline for notifying us of the contact is September 1<sup>st</sup>. That date is, of course, already past, so just confirm or update this contact information as soon as possible by e-mail (preferred method), fax, or regular mail so we can update the website and ensure the correct person receives future correspondence.

### ***Course Options and Youth Options Concerns***

**Share this Information with All Appropriate People:** Please forward this memo to anyone in your district or institution who works with Youth Options or Course Options. I get questions from a variety of school district and college staff folks; many could benefit from this information but are not included on the listserv. So please share generously!

**Notifying Districts after Receiving a Course Options Application:** If you receive a Course Options application from a student (whether you are another school district, a college or university, or some other educational institution), *please immediately send a copy of that application to the student's school district*. This informs the district that an application has been submitted so they can begin the review process. The district's timeline for review is exactly the same as the educational institution. Consequently, you can't wait until after you've approved the application to first notify the district or they will not have time to review and act on it (unless you act on it immediately after receipt).

**Receiving a Course Options Application from an Educational Institution:** The flip side of the above concern is that districts will receive Course Options applications from another district or a college or university and that institution's section of the application has not been completed. For the reasons noted above, that is correct. They should send you a copy of the application so you know it has been submitted and you can then begin your own review process. Your review and notification timeline is exactly the same as theirs, so you can't wait until they make a decision before making your own decision.

**Notifying Other Parties of a Course Options Application Decision:** Whether you are a student's school district or an educational institution, you are responsible for notifying the student and the other party (district or educational institution) of your approval or denial of an application one week prior to the course start date. You should send both parties copies of the application showing your decision.

**Ensure Students and Parents Understand that this is College Enrollment:** While Youth Options and Course Options allow students to take courses at no or limited cost to the student, *they and their parents need to understand that these programs are not risk-free*. The students are enrolled as college students and whatever grade they receive will become a part of their permanent college record. A failing or low grade could affect academic standing when enrolling in college full-time. It could also affect financial aid eligibility and, down the road, acceptance into graduate school. Attending a different institution will not matter; they seek out and find these records when you apply. Make sure a discussion about this takes place with all students and their parents when they are considering these programs.

**UW System Credit Transfer Wizard:** Students may find that courses they took at one college or university will not be accepted as expected when enrolling in a different college or university. The UW System has developed a helpful website that students should use when planning the courses they want to take. The UW System Credit Transfer Wizard can be found [here](#).

**Opportunity Costs of Youth Options and Course Options:** When talking to students and parents about these programs, be sure to discuss the opportunity costs of attending college and university courses. While they are great opportunities, they should be part of a well-thought plan and path. Students should not just use Youth Options and Course Options to get "free" or cheap college credits, especially if the courses won't contribute to a future program or degree or if the student is not prepared to do well in the course. In some cases, the better choice for a student may be a course or program available in their district.

**Student and District Costs for Course Options:** The changes made to the Course Options statute in 2015 does allow Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs or college and universities) to charge students some costs for courses they attend. This does not allow districts to charge students nor to transfer charges to students. For regular IHE courses taught by an IHE instructor, the district must still pay half the regular tuition plus the full cost of books and fees. The IHE may then charge the student additional tuition and fees beyond what they will get from the district. Most UW System institutions are charging students some amount while most technical colleges are not.

For IHE courses taught by a high school teacher, the district probably will not pay anything to the IHE while the IHE may charge students. Here again, most or all UW System institutions are charging students a per credit cost while not charging districts. Technical colleges are not charging students or the districts.

**Frequently Asked Questions:** Both the Youth Options and Course Options websites include links to Frequently Asked Questions. You are encouraged to look through these documents just to become more familiar with the programs and better understand some of the nuances of each. You can access the Youth Options FAQ [here](#) and the Course Options FAQ [here](#).

## ***Course Options***

The above section covers the key reminders and concerns related to Course Options. For other information, visit the Course Options webpage (<http://dpi.wi.gov/courseoptions>).

## ***Youth Options***

There continue to be no changes to the Youth Options program. As always, all the materials needed to administer the program are located at the DPI Youth Options web page (<http://dpi.wi.gov/youthoptions>). As forms and materials are updated, they will replace older versions on the web page. Below is general information about Youth Options for those new to the program.

**College Contact Person Information:** College contacts should confirm that our information is current on the appropriate contact list linked below. If any information is incorrect, please provide the correct information and we will get it updated.

- [Private/Independent Colleges](#)
- [UW System Colleges and Universities](#)
- [Wisconsin Technical Colleges](#)

**Youth Options Application Form (PI-8700-A):** This form, officially called the *PI-8700-A Youth Options Program Plan and Report*, is to be used by all students applying for Youth Options. Though the administrative rules allow for a local form to be used, having different forms has resulted in a number of challenges in the past. Consequently, the PI-8700-A is the form that needs to be used.

No changes have been made to the form this year. The form is attached to this e-mail and is available at the website [here](#).

**Youth Options Transportation Reimbursement Claim Form (PI-8701):** School districts are not responsible for transportation reimbursement; however, they should ensure this form is available to all students participating in Youth Options. It has been updated with the current year household size and income figures from the federal government. Following are important points for students/parents:

- Students/parents are responsible for completing and mailing their own forms directly to DPI (at the address provided on the form) within 30 days after completion of the college semester.
- There are date deadlines listed on the form by which the form must be received to be considered with the previous semester's claims; forms arriving after the deadline will be held and included with the following semester's claim requests resulting in a delay in payment if approved.
- Students/parents must include a completed and signed copy of the PI-8700-A Program Plan and Report with their transportation reimbursement claim form.

- Signatures from school district staff are required to verify approved participation in and completion of Youth Options courses.
- Due to the number of claims filed and limited funds, the amount awarded to claimants may be less than the eligible amount. This amount has ranged from 35 to 100% of the maximum amount the past few years.
- The updated form can be accessed [here](#).

**Brochures:** The Youth Options brochure is available in a tri-fold and a non-folded version. Sharing this brochure with students satisfies the requirements of Wisconsin Administrative Code PI 40.04 (3)(a), which specifies that “annually, by October 1, each school board shall provide information about the youth options program to all pupils enrolled in the school district in the 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> grades.” Including Youth Options information in course catalogs or other publications also satisfies this requirement. The two versions of the brochure can be found at:

- [Tri-Fold Brochure](#)
- [Non-Fold Brochure](#)

**Private College Reimbursement Amount Memo:** The Youth Options statute limits the amount a private institution of higher education can charge for students taking courses through Youth Options. Private IHEs may charge their actual tuition, fee, and book costs or the total amount calculated by a statutory formula, whichever is less. Each year DPI posts the formula amount once all necessary data are available. The current memo is for 2015-16 but can be used for estimating purposes until the final amount is determined and posted; this usually occurs in November or December. For planning purposes, you can use last year’s figures [here](#).

**Timeline:** A copy of the timeline for Youth Options activities and deadlines is available at the Youth Options website [here](#).

As noted previously, please forward this information to others in your district or at your institution who may have an interest.

For questions and concerns about any aspect of the Youth Options or Course Options programs, please call me at (608) 267-3161 or e-mail me at [kevin.miller@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:kevin.miller@dpi.wi.gov).